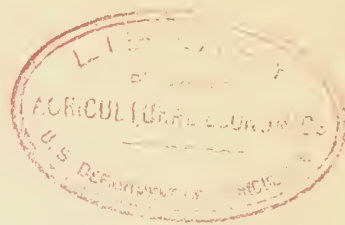


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CO - O P E R A T I O N

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[1936⁷]

CO - O P E R A T I O N

I

POWER OF THE AMAZON

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Women are born organizers. They will band themselves together in some sort of organization, whether it is a ladies' aid, a sewing circle, a temperance union or a women's political club. Their organizations are usually service organizations, and throughout history they have at one time or another wielded considerable power.

Women were the life of the temperance movements. Since suffrage has been won by them, they have used politics as a vehicle of power. Now they have a new wagon upon which to ride -- and that is the cooperative movement.

Women have a greater opportunity for social service through the cooperative movement than has ever been theirs before. Through the power of the women's cooperative guild, local auxiliary or study club, they are able to influence their neighbors in setting up new agencies for the public good. And through their knowledge and understanding of the cooperative movement they are able to organize actual service cooperatives which will function.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

What services are needed in your community? Make a survey and decide what is needed. Study the methods by which it may be brought about, and

then do the things that must be done. Here are some of the service groups which women can organize on a cooperative basis: (1) Children's Clinics, (2) Day Nurseries, (3) Kindergartens, (4) Cooperative Medical Associations, (5) Dental Associations, (6) Summer Camps, and in rural districts (7) Rural Electrification Cooperatives.

How may this be done? Let us see how others have done it.

CHILDREN'S CLINICS

Many women's social organizations have taken up the projects of clinics for pre-school children. Usually this is purely a labor of love with a number of women doing a great deal of hard work and the nurse and doctor donating at least a part of their services. Immunization clinics are handled in much the same way. A few persons work very hard that a large number may profit.

CHILD HEALTH COOPERATIVE

Instead of a mother's club, with more or less haphazard study and discussion, it is possible to form and operate a cooperative organization which will efficiently handle the problems of the mother and the child, and which will conduct the clinics for health check-ups and immunization against disease.

The Child Health Cooperative is set up just as any other cooperative business. The cost of a share of stock depends upon the number of mothers who wish to take part in it.

A general meeting is held at which time the purpose of the cooperative will be thoroughly discussed. This purpose will be stated in the constitution and by-laws.

A board of directors is elected which will arrange for the services of a manager.

The Manager

The mistake of expecting the manager to work for nothing must not be made. A servant employed to do housework is not expected to work without pay. Neither should the manager be expected to give her time, even though it be only part time, to the management of the Child Health Cooperative, without some compensation.

What shall the manager do? First, she will find a headquarters for the Child Health Cooperative. It may be only one room. She will see that it is furnished properly, keep the books (at first) of the cooperative, handle all details of the work, such as arranging for clinics, nurses, doctors and teachers, and report monthly to the board of directors what has been done.

The Work of the Child Health Cooperative

The functions of the Child Health Cooperative are to provide an agency which will be of service to both mothers and children.

In a certain small town, the Child Health Clinic provided a day nursery with a registered nurse in charge of children under school age. This was really a combination nursery and kindergarten since the older children were under the supervision of a teacher.

Mothers who worked left their children there for a nominal charge. Mothers who did not work sent their older children to the kindergarten and left their babies at the nursery while they went shopping or attended social affairs. Farmers' wives found the Child Health Cooperative a splendid place to leave their children while they did their shopping.

Young girls were trained in caring for children at the Health Center, as the cooperative was called. This is an added advantage in a small town where getting a responsible person to care for the children during an evening is a problem.

A trained teacher was put in charge of the kindergarten. Since small towns do not usually have kindergartens, this was a real advantage to both mothers and children.

This work now requires a fair sized building and a playground to accommodate increased patronage.

Every three months a clinic was held at which time the children were checked for general health. Immunization clinics are also a part of the Health Cooperative.

Operation

Each mother paid a certain sum per hour, while her child was in the charge of the nursery, kindergarten or playground. Fees for the clinics were paid to the doctors and nurses from the educational fund of the Health Cooperative.

Dividends

At the end of the year the surplus earnings were divided just as in any other cooperative. Operating costs were paid and then a reserve and an educational fund set aside.

After this the members voted upon what should be done with the remaining funds. A part of these savings was used to add new equipment to the Health Center. The rest was returned to the mothers on a patronage basis, that is, the number of hours of child care was computed, and the surplus

earnings divided by that number. Let us say that the total number of hours of child care was 25,000 hours during the year. In the treasury, after all expenses are paid (which includes rent, wages to manager, nurses and teachers), reserve and educational funds set aside, there is \$250. That means that there is one cent per hour dividend to be returned.

Service

Mrs. Smith, who works in a store, has left little Johnny at the Health Center eight hours a day, six days a week, fifty weeks in a year. That is 2400 hours. At the end of the year she has a dividend of \$24 from the Child Health Cooperative which means that she and Johnny can have a few days at a lake during vacation. Added to that, little Johnny has been in trained hands while his mother worked; he has had a free health check-up every three months, and he has had the company of other children. All of this at far less cost to Mrs. Smith than the hiring of a nurse and keeping an establishment large enough to accomodate her would be.

Mrs. Jones, who is the young wife of a well-to-do lawyer, leaves little Sally at the Child Health Center on those afternoons when she is very busy -- when she entertains or goes shopping or attends her bridge club. About 300 hours during the year. At the end of the year she receives \$3, which she gaily puts in Sally's bank. She has had the comfort of knowing her child is in excellent hands while she is busy or while she is enjoying herself. Sally, too, has the advantage of the free clinics and the company of other children.

Mrs. Brown, the over-worked mother of several small children, lives on a farm. A trip to town with three small children is a thing to be dreaded. But she puts them in the nursery on Saturday afternoons, and gets

her shopping done in peace. The children make new friends and learn new games, a most valuable thing for farm children. She has the free clinic service also, which means much to a farm mother. At the end of the year she has 500 hours patronage, which gives her a \$5 bill to apply on another year's care for her children at the Health Center.

Mrs. Gray is a college woman who has a three-year-old child. She is delighted to be able to send him to a kindergarten, an advantage which most small towns do not have, and her dividend is put aside for her son's college fund.

Advantages

A building which has been a liability, standing empty, is rented for the use of the Child Health Cooperative. A number of trained people -- the manager, the nurses, the kindergarten teacher, are given employment. The splendid training in child care which a number of young girls receive enables them to earn extra money in the evenings by caring for children whose mothers desire responsible persons with whom to leave them.

MEDICAL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

It is in this field that the women's guild or cooperative group may render a very valuable service by bringing medical and dental care into communities where there is none, or where there is not enough to supply the entire community. Cooperative medical associations, cooperative hospitals and cooperative dental associations are operating in many parts of the United States. A women's group can do much to foster such an association by studying its operation, its costs and its benefits; and by getting

together facts and figures upon medical cooperatives already in operation, and presenting them to the people in the community who will be interested in such a cooperative project.

Needless to say, the medical cooperative operates upon the same lines as any other cooperative. Share capital is sold to members in order to raise a sufficient operating fund. In case there is not a hospital in connection with the cooperative project, it will be possible to estimate very closely the cost of the project per year. This will include the salary of a doctor, and perhaps a nurse, and, if the cooperative is ambitious, the rent of rooms to serve as a clinic.

Facts and figures upon this form of cooperative may be obtained by writing to the Economic Development Section, Management Division of Resettlement Administration.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION COOPERATIVE

This type of association offers an opportunity for rural women to work for a cooperative which will make life much more pleasant and comfortable. A cooperative power company would be set up to supply electricity to rural homes. This company must belong to the users of electric power. Although the Government stands by to lend a helping hand in the formation of this type of cooperative, the actual operation, direction and management of a cooperative power company is exactly the same as any other cooperative association. It is in the hands of the people. All of the safeguards of electing the right persons on boards of directors, of employing a competent manager, who knows business practices, and the mechanics of power companies, apply to the Rural Electrification Administration just as to any other cooperative. Women who know the pitfalls of cooperatives through their study

clubs, can be of inestimable value in getting this cooperative to function.

SUMMER CAMPS

More and more people are recognizing the value of summer camps for young people where recreation and education are equally balanced, and where young people are enabled to meet others from various sections of the state or nation.

A number of guilds or locals may often cooperate in setting up a camp and in qualifying children to enter it. A camp can be run upon a cooperative basis and should be so handled. An Encampment Association consisting of a number of study clubs, locals or guilds, in fact, all the women's organizations in a territory might well be formed.

From this association a board of directors is elected. The board can then choose the camp site and select the camp staff. The staff will consist of a manager, a director of activities and classes, a lifeguard, nurse, barracks manager, recreational director and instructors. Of course, some of these offices may be combined. All of these persons should be paid a salary.

In this enterprise, as in all others, the selection of a good business manager is most important. Before going into this, it is advisable to get detailed information upon camps from organizations which have had experience in conducting them.

THE POWER OF ORGANIZED WOMEN

No group of women who are organized as cooperators, whether it is in a cooperative guild or in a cooperative health association, should overlook the fact that the real power in organization lies in the size and intelligence of the organized group.

An organized group of women which embraces only one locality is only one step better than individual action. Affiliation with other groups which are working along similar lines will enable these groups to become a part of state, national and eventually international groups.

OBJECTIVES OF COOPEPATIVE WOMEN ORGANIZATIONS

State and nationwide child health cooperatives can bring real influence to bear in gaining legislative action on better laws for maternity care, social advances in medicine, demands for more appropriations for medical research, and many other worthwhile steps in social advancement.

State and nationwide cooperative summer camp associations can exert great influence upon the culture of the country, its education and recreation.

State and nationwide cooperative associations for the distribution of goods are the most powerful influences in getting quality goods and in setting standards of quality. The voice of such organizations means much in getting Government agencies to do worthwhile work in research in order that quality standards may be raised and maintained.

The influence of these organizations upon permanent peace between nations is bound to be most important.

Woman is no longer of primary importance as a producer in the home, but she is a real power in the world as a consumer and as a force in social progress. The Cooperative Movement is the greatest vehicle she has at her command to make this power felt.

CO - O P E R A T I O N

II

THE AMAZON IN ACTION

Women have a greater duty to the Cooperative Movement than merely giving it their patronage. They must also study and teach it.

Woman has been called the Amazon Consumer, because of her power as a consumer.

The Amazons, we are told, were very large women of great strength who ruled their country and did all the fighting for it. Legend tells us they were far stronger than the men of the tribe. It is from this story that we get the term Amazon, meaning a powerful woman.

As an influence in buying woman is powerful, indeed. Since the Cooperative Movement offers her the opportunity to get the most for her money, it is only natural that she will wish to use her power to the best advantage in supporting this kind of business.

There are cooperative associations for carrying on almost every form of business done in the world. Women have organized themselves into cooperative guilds, auxiliaries and locals to help keep interest alive in this business. Through the women's part of the cooperative, as a rule, the educational work is done.

The Cooperative Movement is a product of the Machine Age, and it is like any other machine. Setting up a cooperative association is like buying an automobile. It won't run by itself. We have garages and service stations all over the country to keep automobiles in condition. A woman's auxiliary to a cooperative organization or a women's cooperative

guild is much like the service stations which keep the automobile in running order. Theirs is the task of educating their neighbors about the Cooperative Movement, and studying its progress.

Women who study and discuss the kind of goods needed are of great value to their cooperative association. Supplying a known market saves money for any business.

THE COOPERATIVE GUILD

We shall use the term Guild for the women's organization. Many cooperative organizations have a women's auxiliary, while the educational organizations of many farm cooperatives have local units of which both men and women are members. But we shall use the Guild as an example of the women's part of the cooperative.

OFFICERS

The officers needed are a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and reader.

The president presides at meetings and generally acts as head of the Guild. The vice-president presides at meetings when the president is absent. The secretary keeps a record of the meetings, and often keeps a record of the Guild's accomplishments. This is a valuable record and should be a part of the secretary's duties. The treasurer, of course, has charge of all funds, and keeps a record of receipts and expenditures.

GUILD READER

The office of guild reader is a most important one. She may be elected for a year, or a new reader may be appointed for each meeting. Perhaps the best plan is to appoint a reader for a term of three or four meetings.

Working in cooperation with the Education Committee she prepares the material which is to be read at each meeting.

Busy housewives do not, as a rule, have time to do all the studying they would like to do. But at the meeting of the Guild, after the business meeting is over and the members are ready to start the mending, or hemming of dish towels, or darning of socks, or whatever it may be that the hostess needs help in doing, the guild reader reads aloud the material they wish to study and discuss. It may be a few items from the cooperative paper; it may be current news of world affairs; it may be one of the excellent pamphlets or books on cooperation, or it may be a chapter from a book on consumer problems or a speech from the Congressional Record. The reader should be chosen for her ability to read clearly and interestingly. There should be opportunity to discuss the material read and to freely ask questions.

One of the small monthly magazines which put out a digest of the month's worthwhile articles would be an excellent investment for the Guild to make.

THE MEETING

The guild should never lose sight of the fact that it is educational. It may well be called a study club instead of a guild. It should never be allowed to degenerate into a card club.

The business meeting should be conducted with due regard to parliamentary procedure. Roberts' "Rules of Order" is a standard guide on parliamentary usage.

It is well to open a meeting with a song or two in which everyone joins. There are many good songs on the theme of cooperation.

Reports of committees should be heard and discussed.

A short program, not more than fifteen minutes in length, should then be given, after which the study topic for the meeting is taken up.

The study period may be devoted to a discussion of a lesson course upon some special subject; or it may be given over to a demonstration of the merits of some food or material, or a speaker upon the topic planned for study may fill in this period.

The members are then ready to take up the work provided by their hostess and listen to the material prepared by the guild reader.

The work done in these meetings is the very essence of cooperation. The family mending is often a bugbear to the housewife, but it is light work when many hands are employed at it while the guild reader reads an interesting article or pamphlet.

The Guild should be a power in the community, not only in influencing the cooperative spirit and furthering study, but in giving the members a feeling that it is a valued helper.

Lunches served at Guild meetings should be very simple, and should be served at the end of the meeting.

COMMITTEES

It is usually a wise plan for the president to ask the advice of the other officers in appointing committees.

The Guild will need the following committees: (1) Program, (2) Education, (3) Recreation, (4) Social Relations, (5) Statistics, and (6) Legislative.

If the Guild is small, some of these may be combined as, for instance,

Program and Recreation or Education and Social Relations. The secretary may keep the statistics and prepare the year book, if necessary.

1. Program Committee. Long programs are out of place at the regular Guild meeting. However, entertainment might be provided by having one or two children of the members give musical solos or readings. The program at the regular Guild meeting should not be more than fifteen minutes in length. Special programs should be planned during the year to which the families of Guild members might be invited. These programs should be planned carefully so that the Guild will stand for high-grade entertainment.

2. Education Committee. This committee should work with the Guild reader in preparing a definite plan for study during the year. A definite topic should be chosen and then all educational work can be planned around it.

This committee would handle publicity for the Guild and would have articles covering the activities of the Guild and progress of the cooperative business published from time to time in the local newspapers.

A small mimeographed or hectographed paper carrying news and interesting articles and reports of the Guild work should be prepared by this committee and circulated among the members. If this little paper can be enlarged to carry news of the progress of the cooperative and sent to all members of the cooperative, it will be of great value to the organization.

The Education Committee should be ready to help in a drive for new patrons or in establishing a new cooperative. A well informed Education Committee who will call on the women in a community and make them understand the worth of a cooperative medical association, cooperative nursery, a new

cooperative store, grain elevator, oil company or creamery, can do wonders toward getting these things established.

3. Social Relations Committee. It is the duty of this committee to interest the community in the cooperatives. Social activities are under the direction of this committee together with the Program Committee. Special entertainments to which the Guild members' families and non-members are invited, are a part of the Social Relation Committee's work. Demonstrations of cooperative products and projects at county and state fairs are important.

A group of Guild members in a northern state conducted a cooking school showing the quality of cooperative foods. Another Guild directed a "Clean-Up-Paint-Up" campaign which not only helped the business in paints of the cooperative store, but made a great improvement in the home conditions of the territory and improved the appearance of the countryside.

A group of women in a local unit of a large farm organization, through the efforts of their Social Relations Committee, obtained the services of an expert to teach the members how to properly dress and pack turkeys for market. Through this they were enabled to command top price on their turkeys and thus add materially to the family income.

There are many instances of cooperative womens' organizations sponsoring free clinics for children of pre-school age or of handling the immunization work for diphtheria or other virulent diseases.

Any wide-awake group of women who are truly interested in the cooperative movement will be able to plan many more activities for their Social Relations Committee.

4. Legislative Committee. It is the duty of this committee to study

current legislation and to report upon it to the Guild. It is, of course, nearly impossible to keep abreast of all legislation, but that which has to do with cooperation, child health, maternity care, education and peace should be kept before the study club at all times. Petitions and resolutions sent to the legislators receive their attention, personal letters do more, but a committee of two or three women, appearing before a legislative committee will have a great deal of influence upon their actions.

5. Recreation Committee. This committee should make a study of the recreational facilities for young people and adults in the community. It is their duty to make an effort to sponsor worthwhile recreation in the community. Playgrounds, baseball diamonds, theatre club, bicycle association and summer camp plans should be in the hands of this committee. This committee should also be interested in the kind of movies and other entertainment which is offered in the community.

6. Statistics Committee. There will certainly be two or three women in any group who will be interested in knowing just how much actual savings have been made by the cooperative and all will be interested in keeping a record of other work done by the cooperative and the Guild. The Statistics Committee will keep a record of all activities sponsored by the Guild or study club. They will also keep an accurate record of the number of people served by each activity and the amount of dollars and cents saved by each.

At the end of the year all of these would be compiled into a concrete report, and kept with the records of the Guild for future reference.

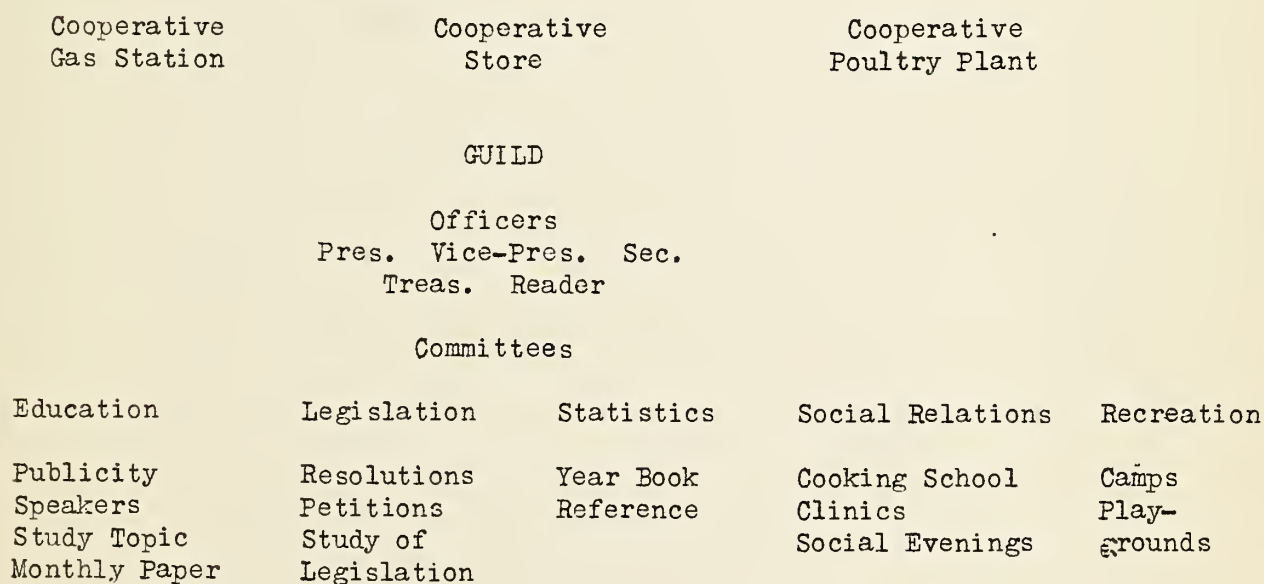
Cooperative organizations all over the nation are making an attempt to gather records of this kind together. The Education Committee would

be able to use this material to great advantage.

It should be emphasized that each committee must keep a record of its own activities during the year. This will make the work of the Statistics Committee much easier and will be of great advantage to the study club and to the cooperative business organization it serves.

It should be kept in mind that the Guild and its committees can be influential, only as long as they refrain from bickering among themselves. This holds true in regard to quarrels and recriminations with other groups or organizations.

The relationship of the Guild and its committees to the cooperatives it serves may be illustrated by the following diagram:



It can be seen from this diagram that the Guild can be the connecting link between all of the cooperative business activities and the surrounding territory.

Suggested Books for Use of Women's Study Groups or Guilds

Mankind - Yesterday - Today - Tomorrow -- Erickson

Cooperation -- Hall and Watkins

Cooperative Democracy -- J. B. Warbasse

Story Without End -- Leslie A. Paul

Cooperation Around the World -- V. S. Alanne

Farmers Union Triangle -- Edwards

C O - O P E R A T I O N

III

SHE KEPT FAITH

Ann Tweedale finished molding her loaves of bread and set them aside to rise. She was deep in thought, as well she might be, for this was the town of Rochdale in the year 1852, and Ann was one of those brave souls who had helped to start the first co-operative venture in England -- the little store in Toad Lane. Now through mismanagement of the corn mill and some of the other enterprises which had grown out of that first little store, there was danger that the whole plan, for which they had worked so hard, would fail.

There were swift footsteps on the doorstep and Ann's neighbor, Mrs. Rudman came in.

"Ann," she exclaimed, "they are saying that the Store is going to fail. I'm nearly wild. We have 25 pounds in the store--all our savings. I want Benjamin to take it right out. What are you and your brother going to do?"

Ann stopped in her work for a moment. "Wait," she answered shortly. "Wait and hope."

"Hope," exclaimed Rachel Rudman shrilly. "Much good waiting will do. I've worked too hard for that money to let it all go now."

"I can't see where you've worked much for that money, Rachel. It's laid there and grown by itself out of your dividend from the store."

"Yes, it has, Ann, but it's our nest egg that we've planned on and you don't know how hard it was to save that first pound Benjamin put into the store."

"Don't I?" asked Ann, drily. "I know how every penny of mine came."

I put in a pound of my own and my brother James put in a pound. James' wife had just died then, and I'd come to take care of the children for him. I was looking after the house and the children and earning a bit of money besides. I did washing and mended clothes and scrubbed floors for every penny of the pound I put in. And I took care of the children and did the housework besides. James saved his pound too, but we did it by not eating butter or potatoes. We ate bread and oatmeal and turnips that whole winter. And when we had it nearly saved, little Ann had diphtheria and it took it all for the doctor, so we had to begin again. Yes, I know how hard it was to get it."

"It took us a year to save ours," said Rachel, "and now it's grown to 25 pounds I just can't let it go. The ones that used their dividend as it came were wise. They've had better clothes than I have and enjoyed it. Now I'm going to make Ben take ours out before the store fails."

Ann poked up the logs in the fire and watched the flames leap up the chimney a moment before she spoke. There was truth in Rachel's words. The Store was on the brink of failure. She turned to her neighbor--

"If you take yours out, Rachel, and everybody else feels the same way, the Store is surely going to fail. If you saw a man on the brink of a cliff, you wouldn't push him over would you? Even to save yourself some money?"

"But this is different, Ann," wailed Rachel. "All the things we've done without are in that 25 pounds. I've got to save it."

Ann set her lips. "Everyone to his own view, Rachel. I've got 40 pounds in the Store and it stays. It may help to save the Store. I hope it does. I don't want young James nor little Ann nor Johnny to have the trouble my brother and I have had. The store is the beginning of a great change for them, I hope. I have no child of my own and the Store is like a little child to me. It's been abused and lied about and picked at. I would not any more

"take my 40 pounds away when it needs it, than I'd slap little Ann when she comes in crying with a cut finger."

Rachel wiped her eyes and sniffed. "I know, Ann, but you owe first to your family. And mine's done without things that others had so that we could leave the dividend in the Store for a nest egg. I can't bear to lose it."

Ann looked at her neighbor in complete exasperation.

"Rachel Rudman, you talk like I want to lose mine. Mine means as much to me as yours does to you. More maybe, for you've a husband and children and I've nothing of my own but my savings. But I'll tell you this -- my money stays in the Store. The Store made every penny of it. If we hadn't had the store, we'd never have had the money, and we'd not have had the other savings we've made. The Store made the money for me and now when it needs it, it can have it. That's all I've got to say."

Rachel Rudman sat silent for a few moments. Ann began preparing the noonday meal. Rachel spoke at last.

"Maybe you're right, Ann," she said. "The Store has done a lot for us and it did make the money. I'll not tease Ben to take ours out."

Rachel Rudman went home in a different frame of mind than she had known for many a day.

"If Ann Tweedale can leave her dividend when she's nothing else, so can we, when we've each other and the children," she thought. "I'll tell Ben so."

Left alone, Ann smiled to herself. She had helped the Store a little this morning. The pound so hardly earned had grown to 40 times its size. That was miracle enough. But more than that, the little band who had

struggled to start the Store and who had been laughed at and ridiculed, had proven that they were right.

A vision of what the future might be came to Ann Tweedale as she stood in her kitchen that morning--the great co-operative business that might stretch all over the world to make life easier for people such as she. Risking her life's savings seemed a small thing to help forward such a movement.

Ann's savings were not lost; the Store was saved. And from it have grown co-operative businesses all over the world. Ann Tweedale's dream has come true.

